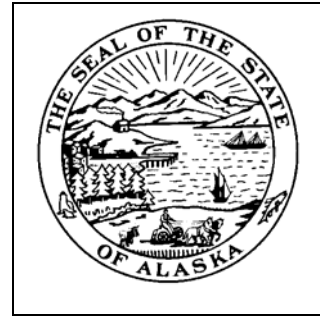


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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 1, 2006**

**Goldpanner Chevron Fined for Breaking Environmental Laws:  
Business left more than a dozen leaking oil drums along Chena Hot Springs Road**

**(Fairbanks)** – A third, and final, defendant pled no contest to misdemeanor charges relating to the 2003 abandonment of several drums of oil along Chena Hot Springs Road. On November 14, James Chabera was sentenced to 90 days, with 90 days suspended, a \$500 fine and two years probation.

On August 28 Goldpanner Chevron and an employee of that company, William Weaver, pled no contest to misdemeanor charges relating to the 2003 incident before Magistrate Patrick Hammers.

As part of an agreement reached with the Alaska Attorney General's Office, Goldpanner Chevron was fined \$40,000, ordered to pay restitution to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for \$3,317.21, and serve three-years probation. Weaver pled no contest for his participation in the drum abandonment and was sentenced to 120 days of suspended jail time, pending successful completion of three-years probation, and a \$750 fine.

The settlement stems from a 2004 DEC Environmental Crimes Unit investigation into abandoned drums found in a gravel pit near mile 25 of the Chena Hot Springs Road. The investigation revealed that Goldpanner Chevron president Vernon Stoner, knowing the drums contained hazardous waste, allegedly allowed Weaver and Chabera to remove over a dozen drums of waste oil from the Chevron station, for use in a friend's used oil burner.

Weaver and Chabera allegedly abandoned the drums at three locations along Chena Hot Springs Road where several leaked waste oil to State lands. One of the drums was illegally abandoned on the banks of Four Mile Creek, within the Chena River State Recreation Area. After learning of the abandoned drums, Mr. Stoner cooperated with DEC and properly disposed of them and cleaned up the contamination. Disposal of Oil to the Lands of the State is a Class "A" Misdemeanor in violation of AS 46.03.710.

To report a spill during normal business hours, call the nearest DEC Area Response Team Office at:

Central (Anchorage) 907-269-3063  
Northern (Fairbanks) 907-451-2121  
Southeast (Juneau) 907-465-5340

Outside normal business hours, call 1-800-478-9300.

**Contact: Parrish Moses, Investigator, Environmental Crimes Unit, (907) 451-5157**

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